fixed deposits in the Reserve or the State Bank of India etc. However, on an earlier directive of the Ministry of Finance, the surplus ESI Fund amounting to Rs. 3017.55 Crore has been invested in the Special Deposit Account of the Central Government and the same is earning interest at the rate of 12% per annum. On demand of the ESIC, the matter has been considered in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the ESIC has since been permitted to make investment of the surplus fund as provided in rule 27 of the ESI (Central) Rules, 1950. Keeping in view the safety of funds and for obtaining maximum possible return, the surplus funds are being invested by the ESIC accordingly.

Medical Problems of Workers

829. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether ESIC has any long term objective with regard to attending to medical problems of workers, who are insured persons;

(b) if so, what are these objectives;

(c) whether there is any proposal to build large super speciality hospitals in some key States by ESIC;

(d) to what extent has ESIC fulfilled the objectives of attending to all the medical requirements of insured persons;

(e) if not, whether ESIC will review its present method of functioning; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (f) The objective of the ESI Scheme has been and continues to be to provide certain cash benefits namely the sickness benefit, maternity benefit, disablement benefit, dependent benefit and to provide for medical care to the insured persons (IPs) and their families. Under Section 58 of the ESI Act, it is the responsibility of the State Governments to provide for insured persons reasonable medical, surgical and obstetric treatment. Accordingly medical care is being

administered by the State Governments and U.T. Administrations except in Delhi and NOIDA where it is being administered directly by the ESIC.

With a view to achieving its objectives, the ESI Corporation has already set up 137 ESI hospitals, 43 annexes and 1452 dispensaries in the implemented areas for providing medical care to the insured persons and their families. Besides reserving 3519 beds in other hospitals, the Corporation has also set up 2722 IMP clinics. The latest super-speciality services are presently being made available to the beneficiaries through tie-up arrangements with reputed medical institutions. A Revolving Fund has also been constituted by the ESIC for providing advances for super speciality tests and treatment.

Review of functioning of the ESIC is an on-going process and change in operation of the scheme is made as and when considered necessary. Recently, on the basis of recommendations of the Satyam Committee, ceiling on the expenditure on medical care has been enhanced by the ESIC from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 600/- per I.P. per annum with effect from 1.4.99. In order to improve medical care facilities in ESI hospitals/dispensaries, the ESIC Corporation has recently formulated an Action Plan and forwarded the same to the State Governments for implementation in consultation with ESI Corporation. The Action Plan includes, inter-alia, provision of modern equipments in hospitals, establishment of Regional trauma centres, establisment of super-speciality services, blood banks, cancer prevention centres, development of indigenous system of medicine, provision of necessary equipments in dispensaries etc. In order to provide proper diagnosis and timely treatment of occupational diseases, the Corporation has set up four Occupational Diseases Centres i.e. one each at Delhi Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai and expenditure on running these centres is being met entirely by the ESIC.